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ADMINISTERING THE POSR TO LOWER CLASS CHILDREN.

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A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS USED FOR OBTAINING A RATING OF JUNIOR-TEACHERS FROM THEIR PUPILS IN A GRADE SCHOOL WHERE THE CHILDREN WERE OF LATIN-AMERICAN DESCENT AND FROM A LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS. THE QUESTIONNAIRE THAT HAD BEEN USED BEFORE WITH MIDDLE-CLASS CHILDREN IN TWO OTHER SCHOOLS CONSISTED OF 40 QUESTIONS REQUIRING "YES" OR "NO" ANSWERS. THE INVESTIGATOR FOUND THAT THE FIRST- AND SECOND-GRADE CHILDREN HAD NOT BEEN TESTED BEFORE IN ANY WAY. THEY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND DIRECTIONS. INSTRUCTIONS TO CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWERS CONFUSED THEM, AND THEY COULD NOT FOLLOW THE QUESTIONS WHEN SPOKEN IN ENGLISH. FOR THE FIRST TWO GRADES, QUESTIONS HAD TO BE READ FIRST IN ENGLISH AND THEN IN SPANISH. SOME WORDS AND CONCEPTS USED IN THE TEST APPEARED TO BE TOO ADVANCED FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS TESTED IN GRADES 1-6. THE INVESTIGATOR CONCLUDED THAT (1) READING QUESTIONS IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH MAY HELP AT ALL GRADE LEVELS AND (2) SPANISH-SPEAKING PERSONS CAN ELICIT MORE COOPERATION FROM THE PUPILS, AND, PERHAPS, MORE HONESTY IN THE ANSWERS THAN AN ANGLO. (AL)

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Counseling and Assessment Division
Research and Development Center in Teacher Education
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A pilot study begun at Metz Elementary School involved administering the POSR there to pupils of the junior teachers involved in the Research and Development Center Program.

The POSR had been administered previously at schools such as Highland Park, Casis, etc., but it had not been given to pupils from a low socio-economic group of Latin-American descent.

The POSR consists of forty questions which the pupils are to answer YES or NO. At Metz, because of the difference in class, language, and background, the instrument had to be adapted to the particular pupils involved. Therefore, the administration of the POSR was changed to meet three problems:

1. Metz first and second grades had never been tested in this manner before. Circling the correct response was confusing to pupils. They could not understand the directions and they could not follow the questions even when spoken aloud in English.

2. The words and concepts used in the questions seemed too advanced for the majority of the students tested (1-6). The words most often needing explanation to students at all grade levels were as follows:

relaxed	fair
ideas	interesting
pick on	fool (play tricks on)

3. A related problem was the attitude of the cooperating teacher. More often than not she would react to the instrument as an evaluation of her and her class. Often she identified with the Junior Teacher and would report to her how the class "graded" her on the POSR.

Interestingly, pupils in the class would either volunteer to the Junior Teacher how they rated her or they would be asked by her.

The first and second problems were partially solved by having the questions read first in English and then in Spanish. This was done only with the first and second grades but may prove to be necessary for all grade levels. It seems that a Spanish-speaking person can elicit more cooperation on this and perhaps more honesty than an Anglo. Whether appearance and cultural background are relevant is problematical. In any case bi-lingual questionnaires seem to help.

Note - The POSR was given at Metz in November and December to the first graders (where most problems were encountered) who had had at that time only nine weeks of formal education. Later testing dates also might help reduce these difficulties.

Illustrations of Differences in Reactions with the POSR at Metz

1. When told to circle the correct response , several children would make beautiful circles down one column or another, disregarding the questions.

2. Primary grades had a tendency to shout their answers aloud. The more often they were urged to keep their answers to themselves, the louder they shouted. This seems to be one way they receive attention.

3. Some pupils even if told to keep their eyes on their own paper, still talked the matter over with a neighbor or even a friend across the room.

4. The children at Casis and Highland Park always noticed that one question is repeated (Number 5, 30). As yet no one has mentioned this at Metz.

5. Dilema- (spelling) how do you explain " Fair" or " Bad" to a first grader?

6. Most boys will <u>not</u> in any way answer the question, " Do you wish you were like her?" positively if it means they want in any way to be like a girl.